

PENNSTATE



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The Honorable Tom Coburn, M.D.  
United States Senate  
172 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Coburn:

I am writing in response to your July 27 letter to Dr. Graham Spanier, President, The Pennsylvania State University.

The majority of federal funding that is awarded to Penn State University is for research or student financial aid. Student aid is tied to an individual student's financial need and as you know, is awarded based on information supplied and verified on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Research funding is awarded in the form of grants or contracts that must adhere to very specific federal laws and regulations. The following are totals for Penn State federal research expenditures in the fiscal years 2000 through 2005.

FY 2000 - \$228 million  
FY 2001 - \$248 million  
FY 2002 - \$284 million  
FY 2003 - \$307 million  
FY 2004 - \$350 million  
FY 2005 - \$365 million

A more detailed breakdown of this funding and overview of research at Penn State is published each year in our Annual Report of Research Expenditures. These reports may be viewed on the Penn State website at [www.research.psu.edu](http://www.research.psu.edu).

The majority of research funding is awarded by federal agencies after an extensive peer review process. In order to be considered for a grant, researchers must submit detailed research proposals to the sponsoring agency whether it is the National Science Foundation, the Department of Defense, the National Institutes of Health or others. Even when a program or project is funded as a result of a Congressional appropriation, it still must be processed through a sponsoring federal agency and must comply with all laws and regulations governing the award of funding.

Penn State does not have a formal policy regarding Congressional earmarks or appropriations. However we do have a policy that requires any member of the Penn State faculty or staff to work through the Office of Governmental Affairs if they want to seek Congressional support on behalf of the University. Penn State policy AD50 is available on the Penn State Governmental Affairs website at [www.govt.psu.edu](http://www.govt.psu.edu).

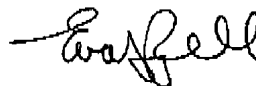
Penn State maintains an Office of Governmental Affairs to handle all official communications with elected officials on behalf of the University; we do not hire outside lobbyists. We enjoy strong support from members of the Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation and are pleased with the successes we have using our current system. As the largest public institution in Pennsylvania, Penn State depends upon strong support from the federal government and we continue to feel strongly that it is in the best interests of our students, faculty and staff to have University employees dedicated to managing our communications with elected officials.

Penn State has benefited from the direct support of members of Congress. With that said, the University enlists the support of Congressional representatives when agencies express a very specific need for research in areas where Penn State had a unique expertise to offer. As the Commonwealth's designated land-grant university, we have a broad mission to provide education, research and service to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the nation. For example, we receive annual grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which are clearly identified in the Agriculture Appropriations Conference Report each year. These grants allow us to work with members of Congress to ensure that we are addressing the specific needs of the Pennsylvania agricultural industry. This funding not only supports critical research, but also provides hands on educational experiences for students. In addition, new discoveries that come from this research are quickly provided directly to industry. Through our extension offices, which are supported with local, state and federal funding, we provide county-based outreach to ensure that the knowledge and educational services on our campuses are disseminated throughout the state.

In summary, we understand that Members of Congress are faced with the difficult challenge each year of addressing national issues as well as serving their local constituencies. We believe it is our responsibility to work with them to help find solutions for their issues and concerns. One avenue they have to help us address campus and local issues is to secure funding through the Congressional appropriations process. I want to assure you that we take seriously our responsibility to spend all federal funding wisely and in compliance with all federal laws and regulations.

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to your questions.

Sincerely,



Eva J. Pell

cc: Graham B. Spanier